

## **QUALITY MEASURE DEFINITIONS**

### **How often hospital patients experienced serious problems**

- 1. How often hospital patients who had an operation died because nursing staff and others failed to identify and quickly treat a serious complication**  
Nurses, who work directly with patients after surgery, are in the best position to identify complications and make sure they are treated rapidly.
- 2. How often hospital patients developed bed sores (sometimes called a decubitus ulcer)**  
A bed sore is a sore or wound on the skin. Bed sores, which can be prevented, often occur because people are lying in one position for too long. Nurses should check for bed sores, make sure patients at risk get special mattresses to prevent bed sore, make sure patients are moved from time to time while in bed, and helped to walk as soon as they can.
- 3. How often patients fall while in the hospital**  
Patients can fall out of bed, or they can fall while trying to get out of bed or move around in the hospital. Members of the nursing staff are best able to protect patients from falls and identify patients at risk of falling so they can be carefully monitored, if necessary around the clock.
- 4. How often patients fall and have an injury while in the hospital.**  
Many patients who fall don't get injured, but some do. Again, nurses are best able to prevent patients from falling and getting injured.
- 5. How often hospital patients have their arms or legs restrained.**  
Some patients are placed in restraints while they are in the hospital. Nurses can put a jacket or vest restraint on the patient to keep them in bed, or their arms and legs can be tied to the bed. Most experts think these steps should be taken as few times as possible, since it is distressing to patients and their families and can lead to bed sores and other serious problems. Monitoring patients is often more effective than restraints in reducing falls.
- 6. How often hospital patients using a catheter (or tube) got an infection in their urinary tract (the organs that are used during urination)**  
If a patient cannot urinate as they usually do, a catheter (tube to drain urine) is put into their body. If nurses and other staff don't carefully put in and take care of these catheters, they can cause an infection in the bladder or other organs.

7. **How often hospital patients in the Intensive Care Unit or the High Risk Nursery, who have had a “central line” inserted into their body, get an infection in their blood from this line.**

A “central line” is a tube that has to be inserted very carefully so that a variety of fluids can be introduced into a patient’s body. It goes into the body through a vein and is quite close to the heart. Physicians insert a central line but nurses make sure these lines are maintained properly and kept very clean, so they do not cause infections in the blood of patients. These infections can be fatal.

8. **How often patients who are using a ventilator to help them breathe get pneumonia.**

Hospital patients, especially those who are in Intensive Care Units or High Risk Nurseries, often need a ventilator to help them breathe. Patients on ventilators are at high risk of developing pneumonia. Nurses and other hospital medical staff should carefully monitor the patient and the ventilator, position the patient so fluid does not build up in their lungs, and take steps to keep everything as sterile as possible to help prevent infections like pneumonia.

### **Steps nurses can take to improve the future health of hospital patients**

We all know smoking is bad for our health, but it is a special problem for people with certain diseases. Patients in the hospital with these diseases are often more open than they might otherwise be to consider stopping. Nursing staff who spend a good deal of time with patients can and should counsel such patients to quit, and let them know about effective programs to help them quit.

9. **How often nurses advise hospital patients who smoke, and who are being treated for a *heart attack*, that they should stop smoking.**
10. **How often nurses advise hospital patients who smoke, and who are being treated for *heart failure*, that they should stop smoking.**
11. **How often nurses advise hospital patients who smoke, and who are being treated for *pneumonia*, that they should stop smoking.**

**Features of hospitals that help make sure nurses provide high quality care**

12. **The mix of different types of nurses used by the hospital. The “nursing mix” shows the relative proportion of hours worked by nursing staff in the following categories:**
  - a. Registered Nurses, RNs employed by the hospital
  - b. Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) or Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) employed by the hospital
  - c. Nursing aides, assistants or orderlies employed by the hospital
  - d. Nursing staff employed by an agency that provides temporary staff to the hospital
  
13. **The average number of hours the nursing staff is available to take care of each patient each day (as compared to doing paper work, participating in meetings and training, and similar activities). Specifically, the average number of hours a day available for each hospital patient from:**
  - a. Registered Nurses, (RNs) who are employed by the hospital
  - b. Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) or Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) employed by the hospital
  - c. Nursing aides, assistants or orderlies employed by the hospital
  - d. All nursing staff employed by the hospital
  
14. **To what degree a hospital’s practices and policies support a positive working environment for nurses. This includes**
  - a. Making sure nurses have influence in the overall management and direction of the hospital
  - b. Having hospital executives who encourage nurses to do all they can to maintain and improve how well patients are taken care of
  - c. Having head nurses and other nurse managers who encourage nurses to do all they can to maintain and improve how well they take care of patients are taken care of
  - d. Having enough nursing staff and support staff to make it possible for nurses to provide high quality care to patients
  - e. A mutually respectful relationship between physicians and nursing staff.

*Handout Number One*

15. **The average rate at which nursing staff voluntarily end their employment at the hospital, each month. People who relocate to a different community are excluded. Specifically, the average rate at which the following kinds of nursing staff end their employment each month:**
  - a. Registered Nurses (RNs) and more advanced nurses such as nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists who have graduate degrees.
  - b. All other members of the hospital's nursing staff including Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) and nursing aides, assistants and orderlies